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STAFF NOTES:

**Middle East
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South Asia**

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MIDDLE EAST – AFRICA – SOUTH ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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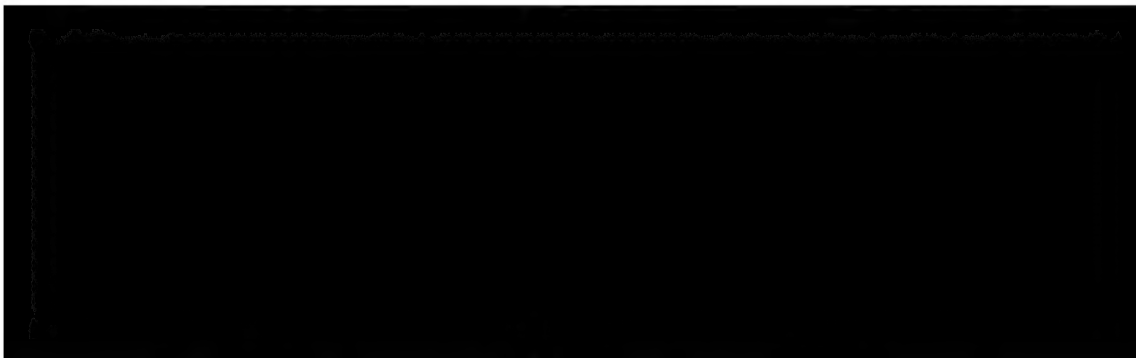
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SECRETOman*Shah Wants War Ended*

The Shah has promised Oman as much military assistance as it needs to defeat the Dhofar rebels.



The Shah, impatient with the slow pace of the war effort, is said to have told Zawawi that Oman could have another brigade of Iranian troops if it would enable Sultan Qabus to end the war this year. There currently are about 2,500 Iranian troops in Oman.



Military activity in Oman has indeed been slow in recent months. There have been few large-scale actions. Most activity has occurred in the western sector of Dhofar where the Iranians are building a string of fortified defensive positions--the Damavand line--about 25 miles from the South Yemeni border.

Some of Sultan Qabus' advisers appear to favor the current deliberate pace of the war. They fear aggressive pursuit of the rebels up to the border would trigger fears in Aden that Oman is preparing for major military action against rebel sanctuaries within South Yemen.

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Aden has reacted to the worsening rebel military situation in recent months by sending additional "volunteers" to Dhofar. Between 300 and 400 South Yemenis are believed to be serving in Dhofar. Their primary role is to provide security in rear areas and logistics backup, but some have participated in attacks on Iranian engineers building Damavand.
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Bahrain*Security Decree Conflict*

On June 23, Bahrain's ruler, Emir Isa, abruptly recessed the National Assembly until October. The recess decree--coming eight months after the opening of the session and as soon as it was constitutionally permissible--was apparently issued because of the government's annoyance over having failed to get the legislators to agree to an acceptable compromise on a controversial security measure. The security measure imbroglio is only the latest episode in the contest the legislature has been waging to expand its political influence at the expense of the executive.

Last October, before the opening of the assembly, Emir Isa promulgated the security measure. Emiri decrees have the force of law if issued when the legislature is not in session; they remain in force until the legislature acts on them. Although the new security measure replaced a much tougher 1965 law which had been used to round up and detain 27 leftist agitators earlier in 1974, it was strongly opposed by the small band of assembly leftists. By May, opponents of the government had pried the security measure out of committee with a "do not pass" recommendation. The government decided not to risk a vote in the 44-member assembly, even though it controls the votes of the 14 members it appoints, and would only have needed 9 of the 30 elected members to keep the security decree from being defeated.

Although the leftists did not accomplish the defeat of the security measure, they clearly outpointed the government. The government's insistence on secret sessions, and the Emir's recess of the assembly before most members wished to adjourn, make it look arbitrary in the public eye. On the other hand, the government now has a four month respite in which to line up support quietly among the legislators for an acceptable compromise security measure by the time the assembly reconvenes in October. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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